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ACTION SS 70

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R 260710Z JUL 67
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC FOR POLAD
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/IR
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R Saigon 1937

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 1937

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

REF: SAIGON 1652

IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JULY 24, VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DR. PHAN QUANG DAN SAID HE WAS REASONABLE SATISFIED WITH PROGRESS OF CENTRAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE IN ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR AUGUST ELECTION CAMPAIGN. DAN SAID THAT MOST MAJOR PROBLEMS RESOLVED SUCH AS TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES FOR CANDIDATES, SCHEDULING OF RADIO AND TELEVISION INTERVIEWS AND ORGANIZATION OF PRESS CONFERENCES. IN ALL,

(1)

DAN OBSERVED, CAMPAIGN ARRANGEMENTS VAST IMPROVEMENT OVER LAST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION UNDER DIEM ALTHOUGH THEY FALL SHORT OF DAN'S OWN PERSONAL OPES.

2. DAN THEN WENT ON TO GIVE E. BOFF OUTLINE OF CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION FOR WHICH HIS RUNNING-MATE PHAN KHAC SUU HAS ASSIGNED HIM COMPLETE RESPONSIBILITY. ACCORDING TO DAN,

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SLATE NOW HAS REPRESENTATIVES AND ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVES IN EVERY PROINCE. (DAN MADE NO MENTION OF DISTRICT LEVEL CAMPAIGN WORKERS.) DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVES ON HOW TO BUILD A CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION, DISTRIBUTE LEAFLETS AND POSTERS TO VOTERS, AND SUPERVISE ELECTION OBSERVERS. SEPARATE INSTRUCTIONS ALONG WITH TALLY SHEETS HVE BEEN PRINTED FOR OBSERVERS THUS PROVIDING FOR INDEPENDENT CHECK ON COUNTING OF BALLOTS. DAN WAS OBVIOUSLY PROUD OF HIS CAMPAIGN EFFORTS THUS FAR, SAID THAT IT REPRESENTED FOUR MONTHS OF HARD WORK BY HIM AND A FEW CLOSE COLLABORATORS, AND HE BOASTED THAT NO OTHER SLATE HAD MADE SUCH ELABORATE PREPARATIONS. ASKED IF HE PLANNED TO OPEN OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS IN

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SAIGON, DAN SAID HE HAD DECIDED AGAINST THIS; HE PREFERS TO BE INCONSPICUOUS IN SAIGON, WHERE HIS SLATE WILL DO WELL ANYWAY, AND TO CONCENTRATE THE EFFORT ON THE COUNTRYSIDE.

3. DAN SAID THAT THIEU/KY SLATE, WITH GOVERNMENTAL MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL OVER AND ABOVE THOSE PROVIDED BY ELECTION LAW, WILL BE FORMIDABLE OPPONENT. HE CLAIMED, HOWEVER, THAT DESPITE THEIR MASSIVE RESOURCES, THIEU/KY ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS THUS FAR NOT EVEN AS EXTENSIVE AS HIS OWN. IN REPLY TO QUESTION, DAN SAID HE DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER ELECTIONS WOULD BE HONEST ONES, BUT HE PERSONALLY WOULD REMAIN OPTIMISTIC ON THIS POINT WUNTIL ACTUALLY PROVEN WTONG.

4. COMMENTING ON MERITS OF HIS SLATE AS OPPOSED TO TWO OTHER MAJOR CONTENDERS, DAN SAID THATN IF ELECTED, SUU AND HE WOULD GIVE NATION FIRM, SENSIBLE LEADERSHIP. NEITHER HE NOR SUU HAVE REGIONAL BIS AND THEY ARE PREPARED TO CHOOSE MILITARY MAN AS PRIME MINISTER TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH ARMY. "WE WILL FIND THE BEST, MOST

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HONEST, MILITARY MAN AVAILABLE AND ASK HIM TO RUN OUR GOVERNMENT," DAN SAID. "WITH THIS KIND OF TEAM," HE ADDED, "WE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO GIVE THE NATION THE KIND OF LEADERSHIP IT NEEDS - A BENEVOLENT DICTATORSHIP." DAN CRITICIZED THIEU FOR BEING TOO INDECISIVE AND, WHILE PRAISING TRAN VAN HUONG FORHIS INTEGRITY, THOUGHT HIM TOO MCH OF A SOUTHERN REGIONALIST TO BE ABLE TO PROMOTE NATIONAL SOLIDARITY.

5. COMMENT: THROUGHOUT CONVERSATION DAN CONVEYED IMPRESSION OF BEING VERY MUCH ABSORBED B DETAILS OF CAMPAIGN IN MARKED CONTRAST TO RUNNING-MATE SUU'S MORE LOFTY APPROACH. DAN'S ACCOUNT OF HIS SLATE'S ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES IS IMPRESSIVE ALTHOUGH ITIS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS AT THIS STAGE HOW EXTENSIVE HIS ORGANIZATION AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL WILL ACTUALLY BE. IN THE SEPTEMBER CA ELECTIONS HE HAD CONSIDERABLY MORE PAPER ORGANIZATION THAN HE WAS ABLE TO FIELD IN THE EVENT.

GP-3. BUNKER

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ORIGIN/ACTION

EA-8

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RECEIVED DEPARTMENT OF STATE Aug 3 8 AM 1967 OSD-1 RS/AH ANALYSIS BRANCH

Action: noted S/S-RS

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPT PASS: BANGKOK, CINCPAC, VIENTIANE, CINCPAC FOR POLAD HONOLULU FOR-1 (4)

Action:

Date:

FROM : Amembassy SAIGON

DATE: July 28, 1967

SUBJECT : CVT Reactions to Rejection of Its Senatorial List

REF : (a) SAIGON [illegible]; (b) SAIGON 789

During CVT President Tran Quoc Buu's two-week absence in Europe, the Central Election Committee disqualified the "Worker-Farmer" Senatorial list made up of 10 CVT candidates (see Enclosure No. 1, and ref. (a)). Initial reaction of CVT General Secretary Tran Huu Quyen, who headed the list, was mild disappointment. He shrugged his shoulders as if to say "That's politics."

There has been a delayed reaction of resentment, however. Some Saigon CVT affiliates are discussing protest strikes. Several national CVT leaders are proposing that the CVT advocate a boycott of the September elections.

Buu, who returned to Saigon July 26, says he was "shocked" by the "government's action." He blames the GVN itself because he says he has it on the word of a Central Election Committee member that the National Police ordered the disqualification of the CVT list (among others). The tactic used, according to Buu, was to discredit one of the candidates, To Thanh Tuyen, president of the Saigon CVT Council, and with his disqualification the whole list fell, since the CVT had presented no alternates.

Buu says that the rejection of the CVT list puts him in an "untenable" position for two reasons:

Enclosure:

List of Senatorial Candidates Proposed by CVT in June 1967.

1967 AUG 3 PM 3 06

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Drafted by: LAB:RASenser:gcr

Contents and Classification Approved by: POL:JACalhoun

Clearances: POL:TMRecknagel

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1. Many influential members of the CVT, including Quyen himself, had been lukewarm about the CVT's direct participation in the elections, because they felt that the GVN had not accommodated itself to the role of a democratic labor organization. Buu said he argued hard against this negativist attitude, and persuaded his people that the time had come to rally to the national cause through direct involvement in the political process. The rejection of the CVT list thus is also a rebuttal to Buu's analysis of the GVN, he says.

2. While in Europe Buu encountered much criticism of the GVN, and he says that, despite his own reservations, he vigorously defended the government. One argument he used was that the political development of the country had reached the point that the CVT, for the first time, was running its own list in the Senate race. He says that this point was particularly persuasive with Ludwig Rosenberg, President of the West German Federation of Labor (DGB), which long has been skeptical about the struggle in South Viet-Nam. So now, in Buu's view, the GVN has cut the ground from under his approach on both the domestic and the international scene.

So far the CVT has not decided what to do next. A national meeting of CVT leaders throughout the country will be held on August 5 to discuss a course of action, or non-action.

Buu and other CVT sources report many rank and filers, holding a deep suspicion of politicians, are more and more convinced that the elections will be rigged. With no CVT list in the field, it will be now difficult to activate their people, according to the gloomy view now prevalent at the CVT headquarters.

COMMENT: It can be argued that the CVT's problem is of its own making since its list should have been of higher quality. Although the CVT list was disqualified on technical grounds involving the dossier of To Thanh Tuyen, it is widely rumored that several other unnamed candidates could have been disqualified for alleged past connections with the Viet Minh or Viet Cong. But the CVT in its present mood is convinced that no list of theirs, however "pure," would have been approved.

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LIST OF SENATORIAL CANDIDATES

PROPOSED BY CVT IN JUNE 1967

* 1. TRAN HUU QUYEN, General Secretary of CVT

* 2. VO VAN DAU, 1st Vice President of CVT, President of CVT Council of Unions in Phong Dinh

3. TRINH VAN HI, Advisor of Federation of Tenant Farmers

4. TO THANH TUYEN, President of CVT Saigon Council of Unions, General Secretary of Union of Bus Workers

* 5. PHAM VAN HOC, CVT Commissioner for Social Affairs, President of CVT Council Unions of Dinh Tuong

* 6. TA NGOC TUONG, CVT Commissioner for Financial Affairs, President of CVT Council of Unions of Binh Duong

7. NGO KHUONG, President of CVT Council of Unions of Binh Dinh

8. NGUYEN VAN TAO, President of CVT Council of Unions of Khanh Hoa

9. LE HOANG CHUONG, President of the Federation of Plantation Workers

10. PHAN VAN DUOC, Director of CVT Insurance Agency

* Members of the CVT Executive Board

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